

HORSE SENSE

Versatile Arabian breed has worldwide following

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When looking at an Arabian horse, one is immediately struck by its intelligence, energy and nobility. Its long, muscular neck, deep chest, strong lungs, perfect symmetry and other distinct features proclaim its desert heritage. The Arabian is well known for its famous "floating trot" and graceful gallop.

Temperament also sets the Arabian apart from many breeds. For thousands of years the Arabians lived among the desert tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. Because of the harsh conditions, Bedouin nomads would share food and water, and sometimes even their tents with the noble animal. As a result, Arabians developed a strong desire for human companionship.

It's no wonder then that the breed has gained a worldwide following. Just ask Lee Murray, president of the Conejo Valley Arabian Horse Breeders Association. Her backyard features a corral with two Arabians, three-year-old Ellie and her baby, Osirus.

Murray's neighborhood is criss-crossed with dirt trails leading to some nearby arenas where horses are free to run and exercise.

"Many of the homeowners around here have one-half to two full acres in their backyards, perfect for horses," Murray says.

The Arabian has gained a bit of a bum rap as just the "pretty faced" horse, Murray notes. "A lot of people mistakenly believe the breed is skittish and hard to

